

maintain a dental clinic in every State in the country to provide necessary dental services for veterans. Right now, there are very few States that do not have at least one dental clinic. My own State of Vermont is one of those States, and I think every State should have that.

My fourth amendment again deals with the issue of dental care. One of the many, many crises facing the American dysfunctional healthcare system is that, by and large, we do not recognize dental care as being healthcare, and the result of that in the general public is there are many, many, many millions of people who cannot afford the outrageously high cost of dental care. These are people, including many seniors, who literally lose all of the teeth in their mouth; they can't chew their food properly. For younger people, they can't go out and get a job successfully because if you open your mouth and you don't have any teeth in it, it is kind of hard to get hired under those conditions.

Currently, out of the 8.9 million veterans enrolled in VA healthcare, only 16 percent—or 1.4 million veterans—are eligible for dental care, and that is because, within the VA, almost the only people eligible for dental care are those with service-connected problems. In other words, if you have a service-connected issue with your mouth, with your teeth, you are eligible for VA healthcare, but if you don't, if you are simply a veteran whose teeth are rotting in his or her mouth, sorry, you are not eligible.

And the limitations of that approach are not only that dental care should be considered as healthcare in general; if somebody is suffering with poor dental care, we should take care of that person because it is healthcare. But there is no question that dental problems, oral problems—infections, et cetera—have an impact on our overall health.

According to the VA, there are roughly 3.9 million veterans who have chronic diabetes and heart disease who are enrolled in the VA—3.9 million. Most of the veterans diagnosed with diabetes were exposed to Agent Orange during their service in the Vietnam war. Furthermore, the overwhelming healthcare consensus is that poor oral health worsens the symptoms of diabetes and heart disease. So what that means in English is that you have veterans out there who are struggling with diabetes, struggling with heart disease, and their problem is exacerbated by poor dental health, poor oral health; and yet they can't get the dental care they need, which not only should be an end in itself, but it also impacts their overall health.

So, without going into great detail, I would say that providing dental care to veterans not only eases pain, not only addresses overall healthcare concerns, but it ends up being a very cost effective approach. In a 2019 report to Congress on the cost of expanding dental care—something that I asked for—the VA stated—and I quote:

... the provision of dental services could result in some reduction in total health care costs.

Neglecting oral health can contribute to health problems including bacterial pneumonia, cardiovascular disease, and oral cancer.

In other words, when you treat oral problems, you are treating overall health issues; and you can keep people healthier and not have to expend a whole lot of money dealing with the health problems of those veterans.

During a VA briefing earlier this month, the VA's office of dentistry stated unequivocally that "dental care is essential to overall health care" while simultaneously advocating to maintain VA's dental eligibility status quo.

The bottom line is that it is not complicated; dental care is healthcare. By ignoring dental care, we cause other healthcare problems and we increase expenses to the VA.

So those are the four amendments, and I hope the Senate will give them serious consideration.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I want to talk today about one of the most disturbing human catastrophes in the world. Now, I have recently visited the Ukraine border, and I have done medical mission work around the world from Haiti to Honduras to Africa. I have seen malnutrition and starvation. I have seen trauma. I have seen the consequences of the lack of potable water and sewage.

I describe this so when I say our southern border—yes, our own southern border—is a humanitarian crisis, you know I am not speaking in ignorance or hyperbole. And this crisis, this humanitarian nightmare, has been created by our own President's policies.

You see, when he was elected, he sent a loud invitation to the whole world; and more recently, when he said he was ending title 42, it was like turning on a stronger magnet. It was like sending a flare, a signal. It was like a giant Times Square billboard telling all the world: Come now, come to the United States. Amnesty is waiting for everyone.

As for the cartels—the people traveling, they paid no mind to the court ruling. Instead, they kept coming. And as we speak, the largest caravan to date is on its way, with more than 15,000 people—bigger than my hometown of Great Bend.

This invitation, this magnet has made an already treacherous, inhumane situation worse. Our President is, indeed, inviting people to their own peril, to their own harrowing, life-threatening journey.

Let me share with you what I saw just 16 days ago on my fourth visit to the border.

Upon our arrival and a short drive to the river, we found the Border Patrol

and our National Guard hard at work with some 30 migrants in line waiting to be processed. They had turned themselves in. And within moments, within minutes, that line was over 100 people. And at the front of the line were two beautiful young sisters, ages 7 and 9. They were unaccompanied—no parents and no families. I can only imagine what it would have been like traveling over 1,000 miles from Central America to the Rio Grande River without your parents or without a family member. I can only imagine what might have happened to them on that trek.

From the river, we traveled to a detention center where the migrants were held for 2 to 3 days.

I have to again compliment our Border Patrol; they are doing an incredible job in a humanitarian crisis by providing showers, shelter, clothing, healthcare, and meals. The challenge is 80 percent of our Border Patrol officers are having to function like they are like running a restaurant, like running a hotel, functioning as social workers while our borders are left unguarded.

And the get-aways—we haven't talked about the get-aways. Let me tell you the story of one young lady I met. Let's say she was probably 17 years of age from Central America. She or her family paid the cartel some \$3,000 to get from Central America through Mexico across the river and into the United States. Now, I don't know if she was raped or violated, but this certainly is a very common situation—all too common during this trek. We do know that some people in her group were asked to smuggle drugs across the border as part of their thoroughfare.

Now, after crossing this treacherous river, she was abandoned by her coyote. She was already dehydrated, had dysentery. She was malnourished. She hadn't slept for days. And she was no doubt frightened. Eventually she found refuge at a cartel stash house on the Texas side of the border. Yes, now the cartel has cartel members living in America along the river and, as I later found out, all across America.

Next the cartel arranged—of course, for a price—for her to be smuggled via car from a border city to a checkpoint some 60 miles away. Now these journeys, too, are treacherous, as migrants are often placed in containers, in the backs of trucks, or in the trunks of cars. And when they are chased by sheriffs, the drivers recklessly place their own human cargo in peril.

But this person wasn't done yet. About 5 miles short of the checkpoint, the human smugglers let her out of the car. Then she had to walk around the checkpoint—probably a journey of 15 to 20 miles—through the Texas heat, scrub brush, and rattlesnakes. In fact, many days now Texas Rangers find dead, decayed bodies of migrant workers or migrant folks who had not made the trek successfully.

So this journey around the checkpoint would take 3 to 4 days. She was

given 2 days' worth of water—a milk jug full of water.

A couple miles beyond the checkpoint, a new human smuggler, hired and coordinated by the cartel to pick her up, awaits. This is where I met our young lady. We watched as she and four others packed into a small car, and a fifth hopped in the trunk. After a short, high-speed chase, the car finally pulled over and the riders fled on foot. Now, most were apprehended very shortly, including the young lady in this photo.

This is when I met the woman in the story for the first time. Again, she hadn't had water for 2 days. Her left knee was swollen and painful. She had multiple cuts that were infected, multiple bruises, and she was semicomatose, fading in and out. She had certainly heat exhaustion and was bordering on a heatstroke. Now, we were fortunate. With some minor first aid, giving her hydration, cooling her down, she is going to make it and she is going to be fine. But for many making this treacherous journey across the southern border, this story ends much more differently and much more tragically.

I am asking—I am begging our President to turn off the magnet, to turn off the billboards that advertise for these people to risk their lives, to stop inviting them to their peril and perhaps their death.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, today, America looks like a country governed by teenagers who grew up reading "Choose Your Own Adventure" books. They got some authority and decided they could govern under a system of choose-your-own-laws. But a government that derives its power from the people cannot endure if its laws change every few years based on the whims of a select few in positions of power. That is, after all, why John Adams said we are "a government of laws, not men."

Folks, our laws are not a buffet. You can't pick and choose which ones to uphold and which to overlook based on your desires. But that is exactly what we are experiencing today under Democratic control. This is a political party that wants to rule but do so without following the rules. They want to break our institutions, rig the system in their favor, and fundamentally transform our country.

Today, we are seeing the result of this radical agenda. Look no further than the Biden border crisis. U.S. law requires that immigrants be deported or detained pending determination if they don't have a legal right to be here, but under this administration, enforcement simply no longer exists.

In September 2019, on the campaign trail, Joe Biden proudly said to those seeking asylum in America:

You should come.

In March 2020, he said:

The only deportations that will take place are commissions of felonies.

President Biden knew we didn't have the detention space, the enforcement capacity, or the administrative staff to follow the law, but he encouraged people to come, and they listened.

If the illegal immigrants who have entered the United States since President Biden took office establish a new city, it would be the ninth largest city in the country, with a population of 1.34 million. And they are still coming. Just this week, we learned that what might be the largest caravan ever—nearly 15,000 migrants—is headed to our southern border. This is unacceptable and unsustainable, and it was completely avoidable.

This manufactured border crisis is also a boon for the deadly drug cartels. Customs and Border Protection estimates that smuggling migrants into the United States earns cartels up to—get this, folks—\$6 billion a year. And in the first 3 months of 2022, Border Patrol seized over 150 pounds of drugs on the southern border. Our country has been struggling with an opioid epidemic for far too long, and the Biden administration's solution is an open border that will allow some of the deadliest drugs to be transported across the country, turning every State into a border State. In fact, in 2021, more than 100,000 Americans died from drug overdoses—the highest number ever recorded—with opioids such as fentanyl responsible for 3 out of 5 of those deaths. Not to mention the horrific abuses many young girls and women face at the hands of their smugglers.

Folks, don't miss this: The Biden administration is aiding and abetting illegal immigration and all the criminal activity that comes with it. They have the tools in their toolbox to curb the flow of drugs and human trafficking and to stop the historic record of illegal border crossings, but they refuse to use them.

On his first day in office, the President canceled the construction of the barrier along our southern border, calling it "a waste of money." Ironically, his decision to not build the wall is the real waste of money because, while it is not providing any security, it is still costing taxpayers. Since pulling the plug on the project, Biden has continued paying contractors upwards of \$3 million a day—yes, you heard it right, folks: \$3 million a day—to watch over the unused materials that are lying in the desert. Taxpayers are being billed to babysit piles of surplus materials.

But some States being overrun by the influx of illegal immigrants would still like to set up barriers to control who is coming across the border from Mexico. Taxpayers have already paid \$350 million for the concrete, the steel, and the fencing that is now sitting idle, collecting dust and dollars. Why not let States that want to build the wall access these unused materials? It would save taxpayers money and deter the unprecedented number of border crossings that we have seen as a result of

Biden's border policies—or in this case, lack thereof.

To paraphrase a well-known quotation in Iowa, if you build it, they will come. Let's paraphrase: If you don't build it, they will come.

Folks, America is and always has been a welcoming nation, but those seeking a better life here have an obligation to respect our laws, and the President has a sworn duty to enforce them. That is why I introduced the Border's Unused Idle and Lying Dormant Inventory Transfer Act, or the BUILD IT Act, which would turn over the unused materials already purchased by taxpayers to construct the southern border barrier to any State wishing to finish the job.

President Biden's refusal to secure our border is causing chaos and allowing cartels to smuggle drugs into communities in Iowa and across the country, while costing taxpayers billions of dollars for nothing.

Here is a simple solution: President Biden, please enforce current immigration laws, curb cartel activity, and put these materials to use. Let's end the taxpayer-funded waste, and let's stop the unprecedented flow of illegal migrants, and let's build it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, normally I don't like to use numbers in speeches because I think numbers get lost in people's minds as they are trying to wrap their heads around numbers, but I do want to use some numbers today because the numbers are just so incredible.

During President Biden's time in office, the Department of Homeland Security has encountered illegal immigrants crossing our border more than 2.8 million times. In not quite a year and a half, 2.8 million people were encountered crossing the border. Last month alone, they caught people trying to cross the southern border illegally 234,088 times. So a quarter of a million people just last month were caught trying to cross the border. That is the highest number in the Department's history. It is more than four times the average monthly number from 2018 to 2020. If you have a problem that is four times bigger than it was in the 3 preceding years, it is probably time to ask, what were they doing in those 3 preceding years that we are not doing now?

Some of the people who cross the border got sent back and may have gotten caught later in the month. They may have been a catch-and-release, and then they come back. But some people who cross the border didn't get caught at all. I am not sure that number is not bigger than the other number. But even if you had double-counting, it is still an incredible number: a quarter of a million people coming across the border illegally in 1 month who were caught—not who were coming across the border but who were caught coming across the border.

We have never seen such a massive or prolonged effort by people to illegally enter our country as we are seeing now. It has created a giant humanitarian crisis at the border. Ask anyone who lives in a border community the problem that has been created by this.

The Biden administration's response has actually been to tie their own hands by removing the most effective tools we have to try to manage the situation. We developed a reasonable approach to the border based on lessons we learned from previous surges—one in 2014 when President Biden was Vice President and one in 2019. These policies helped cut the number of people trying to cross the border illegally. They allowed us to deal with legitimate cases of people seeking asylum in a much more responsible way.

People who actually qualify for asylum come to the United States like people don't come to any other country in the world. We are still the most welcoming country in the world for people who have a legitimate request for asylum, but that doesn't include everybody who lives in a poor and dangerous place.

In contrast to what we have been doing to make it easier for people to seek asylum and harder for people to illegally cross the border, the Biden administration has over and over again reversed the progress that is being made.

As Senator ERNST just well pointed out, on their first day, they halted the construction of the border wall. The logical debate to have there was finish the wall in progress and then have a debate with the new administration about whether you needed more border wall, but they halted construction of the border wall. The material was there. The wall was in progress. In fact, the wall, in some places, had been removed so you could put the more effective wall up, so now there is no wall. There were places where we had known for several years now that people would come across if they could where there was no wall and there was no building the wall. They revoked a 2017 Executive order calling for stricter enforcement of the immigration laws. They canceled the Migrant Protection Protocols. They suspended asylum cooperation agreements known as safe third party agreements, third country agreements. If someone is unsafe where they live and has a legitimate claim for asylum, this is not a legitimate claim for entry into the United States; it is a legitimate claim to get to a safer place for them. Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador all had agreed to those third party, third country agreements.

Even the leaders of even Guatemala and Mexico said that President Biden's policies are incentivizing illegal crossings at our southern border, which, of course, create a lot of illegal transit through their country as well.

Now the administration seems intent on ending the public health policy

known as title 42, which allows authorities to turn back many of the people caught crossing the border illegally. A Federal judge issued a preliminary injunction blocking the efforts to eliminate title 42, but the administration immediately decided they would appeal that decision.

Now, that is exactly the wrong decision at this moment, particularly when the administration is arguing that we need billions of dollars of more money to fight COVID, and I think there is some merit to that argument, but you can't argue that we need billions of dollars to fight COVID and COVID is over at the border and is no longer a problem there.

In fact, just the latest example of the administration over and over again responding to the crisis at the border with the wrong decision. Time after time, the White House could have looked at problems that it was causing with its immigration policies and reverse course. And time after time, it responded by going ahead anyway, doubling down on more than one occasion.

According to the New York Times, there are tens of thousands of people who have been waiting in the border region for title 42 to be lifted. They are watching the Biden administration and the signals it is sending now and how it intends to deal with them the next time they cross the border.

Most of them will be allowed to stay in the country while they go through immigration proceedings, many of which can take years to just get a hearing. That is why waiting in another country like Mexico was a policy that we should have continued to improve and move forward with because most people, when they are waiting, would find out that they didn't have a legitimate asylum claim; that they weren't going to successfully get into the United States and disappear into the country that we live in. And they would wind up going back and making it easier for other people who had a legitimate asylum claim to have that asylum here.

What makes it worse, the administration has proposed taking away essential resources to enforce immigration law. With the budget that they requested for this year, the Department of Homeland Security specified cutting the enforcement and removal budgets to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement by \$614 million. It doesn't sound like, to me, that that is the way to deal with a problem that is the size of the problem that almost every American has a sense of.

In April, the Homeland Security Secretary said that he will need to reprogram funding from other DHS accounts to respond to increased activity at the border, while the administration—his administration—is asking for \$614 million in cuts.

Other parts of the Department, like the Coast Guard, the Transportation Security Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, could

have their operational funding diverted to process paperwork for illegal immigrants at the border.

The human tragedy unfolding on our border is due, in large part, to the policies of this administration, a massive turnaround that occurred on day 1 and hasn't stopped since.

We need that act—and they need to act on border security effectively and restore order to our immigration process.

It is long past time for the administration people to be honest with the American people about the crisis it has created and to do something about it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise today, again, regarding the need to secure our southern border. Right now there is a caravan of migrants making its way to Mexico through the southern border.

Media reports that it could be the largest caravan ever, growing to 15,000 migrants by the time it reaches the U.S. border. The unprecedented and growing crisis at the southern border is due to the Biden administration's misguided immigration policies.

This includes the lack of enforcement of key tools, including the "Remain in Mexico" policy, the safe third country agreements, and the title 42 public health order.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported that in April of this year, over 234,000 individuals were encountered attempting to illegally cross the southern border—234,000 in the month of April.

This is an increase of 31 percent from April of 2021, last year, and a staggering 1,268-percent increase from April of 2020, 2 years ago. There are 234,000 individuals attempting to cross the border illegally in just 1 month—just 1 month.

I was recently in Del Rio and Eagle Pass, TX, to draw attention to the challenges at the border and to meet with the North Dakota Army National Guard soldiers. Our Guard members are providing support to Customs and Border Protection in light of the immigration crisis.

Our dedicated CBP officers and agents are working tirelessly to try to fulfill their mission of securing the border, with the added pressure and stress of addressing the humanitarian crisis occurring with the continuing surge of migrants seeking to cross the border illegally.

While they do everything they can, they face an impossible task that the Biden administration's actions are exacerbating. As I mentioned earlier, the current crisis at the southern border is the result of the Biden administration's policies.

Notably, the Biden administration is now attempting to end the use of public health order 42—just last month. Those efforts failed when a Federal judge correctly issued an injunction preventing the Biden administration from ending title 42.

The Federal injunction noted that rescinding title 42 will result in a significant increase in illegal immigration at the southern border. This includes an anticipated tripling of illegal border crossings at the border, increasing from 7,000 per day to 18,000 per day, should public health order 42 end.

At the same time, the ongoing crisis at the southern border is creating significant challenges for northern border operations and the security of our northern border. Northern border personnel and resources continue to be depleted because of the surge at the southern border. That is unacceptable.

We need to address the ongoing crisis at the southern border and ensure that we have the resources we need at our northern border as well.

Border security is vital to national security, and we need to secure them both. President Biden's actions have incentivized migrants to take the dangerous journey to the U.S. border. We need to change those policies to get the border crisis under control.

That means we need to do three things to ensure that we have a secure border. We need to make sure that we continue the border wall, along with personnel and technology to make sure that we secure the border; we need to reinstate key immigration policies like I talked about; and we need to move toward a merit-based immigration system.

Again, we need to enforce our Nation's immigration laws, resume construction of the border wall, and ensure that we have in place the infrastructure, the personnel, and the technology to adequately secure the border. The Biden administration needs to take these steps, and they need to do it now.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, one of the dangers of having a weak President is that our enemies will be able to test the boundaries that used to keep them in check. They want to see just how far they can push it before we start pushing back. Indeed, we have seen that in action during this Presidency.

The threat of violence, crime, and of the dangerous influence of those who do not wish us well has crept into the American consciousness and made an already stressful time in our history even worse.

Now, last week's news about what could be the largest migrant caravan yet hasn't helped the situation. We are all hearing about it. At least 6,000 people, probably 10,000 people, have set out from the Guatemala-Mexico border because Joe Biden invited them to come or so they think. That is what they heard. That is how they interpreted his actions.

This is not up for debate. You can look at the reports on TV. Now, this is very shocking to so many of the Tennesseans I am talking to every single day.

First, they say this is a massive national security and safety concern. It makes common sense that you would try to stop this, but more importantly because they know that this President isn't just abandoning the border; he is intentionally giving control of that border to international criminals, to cartels, to gangs, to people who do not wish us well.

Now, what it appears to be is that for many of my Democratic colleagues and for this administration, this action of intentionally leaving the border open is there to keep the radical left happy.

This is what they want, an open border policy. But that open border policy for terrorist organizations, fugitives, cartel mules, this is to them all about exploiting Joe Biden's terrible choices and making the chaos work in their favor.

They will continue to push until they are stopped. And right now they are using this to turn these cartels into international organizations. Last year, 160 different countries came to that border.

The drug dealers, they are all very happy with the way it is operating. In April, Customs and Border Protection intercepted more than 50,000 pounds of drugs—37 percent more than in March.

Now, think about that, 1 month, a 37-percent increase. Keep in mind, this data only reflects what the CBP found.

We know for a fact that every month the got-aways make it into the country undetected. And we have no clue what they have brought with them. Law enforcement officials in Tennessee have told me that around 80 percent of the drugs they seize contain fentanyl—fentanyl. That is what they are finding. It is coming right over the border and coming to a community near you, courtesy of the Biden administration.

We also know that business is booming for the human smugglers, and this caravan is about to provide them some excellent cover.

Over the course of 48 hours this week, Border Patrol agents in the Rio Grande Valley sector interrupted four separate human smuggling attempts, and that included 156 different people. That is right, 156 people in 48 hours.

Now, that is just one example that we chose to pull out and share. I have heard a great many advocates on the left accuse Republicans of blowing the scope of these smuggling operations out of proportion, but here is what I will say. I say that just one person falling into the hands of the cartels is a problem. That is one person too many who is being subjected to drug trafficking, human trafficking, sex trafficking, being forced into a gang, being put on a bracelet that is going to track them until they pay their debt to the cartel.

The people locking these migrants into shipping containers and stash houses without food or water—these are not people on a humanitarian mission. A good outcome is not guaranteed, and, indeed, it is quite the oppo-

site. If the cartels guaranteed good outcomes, no one would be left for dead in the desert or die of heatstroke in an overcrowded truck. No one would have to work off their debt as a prostitute or a drug runner after they got here. But the cartels are after money. They are not providing humanitarian aid. So what do they do? They look at the "welcome" mat, and they see it as a way to cash in.

In 2020, the National Human Trafficking Hotline reported more than 10,000 unique cases of potential human trafficking in the United States. Only 6 percent of those victims reported themselves as being U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. That is correct—10,000 cases and only 6 percent were citizens or legal residents. About 60 percent of those victims were female. More than 72 percent of them revealed that they had been forced into prostitution or some other form of sex work. Eighty-four percent of those sex trafficking victims were female.

This problem doesn't begin and end at the border. End Slavery Tennessee reported that they just helped 207 potential trafficking victims in 2021. Now, that is one organization in Middle Tennessee—one. Two hundred and seven trafficking victims in Middle Tennessee.

You know, every town is a border town, every State is a border State, and every U.S. citizen deserves to know why this barbarity has gone unanswered by this administration.

Remember what I said at the beginning of my remarks: Our enemies are watching. They are paying attention. They are looking for loopholes. They are looking for ways to exploit. They want to see how far they can push Joe Biden, how far they can push this administration, and so far, they have not found his limit.

As the President and Democrat allies here on Capitol Hill contemplate how long they are willing to be pawns in this game our enemies are playing, I would advise them to just take a look at the data—at the data. Look at the reports from our own Federal and State Agencies. Go talk to the human trafficking organizations in your State. Look at the number of known terrorists whom our Federal Agencies have apprehended. Look at the drugs that are being seized at the borders, at the ports, and back in your hometowns. Look at the number of people Border Patrol has had to save from smugglers. And remember that you are not the victims here. You have the power to fix this. You could do something about this. You do not have to choose to let the cartels run unabated at the southern border, bringing thousands upon thousands of people to our border. You might be pretending that this situation on the border isn't getting worse by the day, but people can see with their very own eyes exactly what is going on. Tennesseans are watching. I think the American people are watching, and when it gets worse, and it will, they

will never forget that you sided with drug dealers and with sex traffickers over your own citizens.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 925, Alan M. Leventhal to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark; that there be 10 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form on the nomination; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and I certainly hope we don't have to prolong this for very long, but I can report to Members of the Senate that there are Members on this side who have concerns about this particular nomination. Perhaps those matters can be resolved in short order. I certainly understand my friend from Massachusetts and his support for this nominee, and I respect that. In addition, there are larger issues involving actions and conduct of the State Department in Europe writ large that go beyond this nominee. Again, I hope the State Department will work with us on those important concerns. But for those stated reasons, I do object at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I just want to say that I appreciate the position of the Senator from Mississippi, but I will say this on behalf of Alan Leventhal: He is a favorite son of Massachusetts. He has left an indelible mark on our community, on the surrounding community, and he has done just incredible work in his life.

He is in a senior position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has worked to train the next generation of innovators and leaders. He has received broad accolades for his transformational work as chairman of the board of trustees at Boston University.

In every professional, philanthropic, and personal endeavor, no matter how big or challenging, Alan has embodied excellence.

The men and women of our Foreign Service and locally employed staff in Copenhagen will have an exceptional advocate and an accomplished manager and Ambassador, and our strong ally Denmark will get a committed partner with a direct line back to Washington to further strengthen our bilateral relationship. This is critical, as we rely on Denmark—a key member of NATO

and of the European Union—to sustain its leadership role in defense of Ukraine in the wake of Russia's invasion.

So I think it would be invaluable to have him on duty right now, especially at this critical time in European history. I understand the objection of the Senator from Mississippi, and I look forward to working with him and other Senators in order to find a route to removing the objection to this extremely qualified candidate as Ambassador to Denmark.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, over Memorial Day weekend, I spent a chunk of it in Yuma, AZ. In Yuma, AZ, it is 107 degrees in daytime, 102 at sundown. Those of us from Oklahoma are not used to that kind of heat, but it was very helpful to be there, to be on the ground and to see what is happening at that particular border area.

You see, each area of the border is a little bit different. But what we are experiencing right now on our southern border is a continual rolling, chaotic crisis there.

I have people who will catch me occasionally in Oklahoma and will say: It seems like things are going better because I don't hear the media talking about what is happening at the border anymore. And I will smile at them and say: Well, you remember last summer when the media was focused on the southern border? We had 6,000 people illegally crossing a day at that time. Now we have 8,000 people illegally crossing a day—8,000. In fact, last month, we had a quarter million people that illegally crossed the border in 1 month. That was a record, by the way. The previous record for a 1-month illegal crossing was the month before. Things continue to get worse.

But each area of the border is a little bit different. Now I had not been to this particular border crossing in Yuma, AZ, to be able to see how things are different there, but this is either the No. 1 or No. 2 most trafficked areas for illegal traffic across the entire southern border at this point.

What you see first when you are in Yuma, AZ, when you get there to the fencing area, you notice this: You notice in Yuma, AZ, that you have got a port of entry there; and at that port of entry, you have miles and miles of border fence and then a gap in the fence, where on January 20, 2021, construction was on to be able to complete this, but literally, that day, it stopped. And so that gap has never been closed, and so border crossings look like this.

Another picture of it is a picture like this. This scenario where there is a dam on the Mexico side, and on the American side there is the fencing—or at least there was going to be fencing. There is fencing on both sides of this. So individuals literally step over the dam, walk over and walk right up into

the country. And you ask, well, why is this not complete? Is it because we ran out of materials? Actually, if you go just a mile from that last picture, in the desert you will see this: just stacks and stacks and stacks of steel, 30-foot sections all cut and ready to go to be able to close those gaps. But those gaps are not being closed because the Biden administration a year and a half ago determined they were not going to close those gaps; they were just going to leave them open. So there they sit open.

So that is one of the issues. That is different in Yuma than in some of the other areas where they just literally left the steel sit horizontally in the desert rather than being installed vertically—what it was designed for.

The second big issue is in this area because of those gaps in the fence, individuals, as they fly into Yuma—they are not coming in long caravans to come in—they are literally flying into Mexicali, Mexico, taking a charter bus that the cartels have organized for them, where they will pick them up at the airport, load up into a charter bus. They will drive them up to the gaps in the fence with the bus and allow them to be able to step across the border. They were literally—I could see it—they will literally step across the border and wait for the Border Patrol to come and pick them up, like it's Uber XL coming to be able to pick them up at their spot. And they know if they just stand here on this side of the fence and wait long enough, Border Patrol will come by, pick them up in a van. They will take them to the processing area where they get processed and then within a couple of days released into the country wherever they want to go.

These individuals are traveling from all over the world. In fact, when I met with some of the leadership there in Yuma, AZ, I just asked the question: How are things going? What is happening in different spots? What are you seeing?

One of the folks there said: Well, last week—last week—we encountered people from 50 different countries crossing just in this spot.

Why is that? Because the border remains open and people from all over the world know they can fly to Mexicali, Mexico, pay the cartels—and the current rate is between \$7,000 and \$15,000 a person for that section of the border. They get on the buses, drive up to the border, and then they step across.

It is a different kind of thing. We see sometimes pictures of people who have traveled 3,000 miles in a caravan. And by the way, there is another caravan that is actually organizing through Central America right now and coming through Mexico. The current caravan has an estimated 6,000 people in it that are walking their way up and traveling their way up through Central America and Mexico right now.

But the folks coming through Yuma, AZ, are not like that. They step across